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ANGLOMANIA

By LÉO CLARETIE

WHEN I was a child there was a fashion for dessert plates with pictures upon them. One service was a delight to me: the figures represented English boys and girls, the boys in short jackets, kilts, and bare legs, the girls in little round hats with long veils, and skirts spreading like extinguishers. They were fashionable types; England has had with us a vogue of very far-reaching origin, for notwithstanding appearances and wars, the Franco-Britannic *Entente Cordiale* has been ever latent, and the English are the only ones with whom even hostilities have not broken social relations.

It was especially after the First Empire that the English fashions flourished most markedly among us, and no one was in good form, if he did not dress, walk, ride, eat, dance à l'anglaise.

Circumstances were, toward 1820, particularly favorable to the introduction of English styles into France. It was the day of romanticism—and without wishing to enter here into considerations of Literary History—which would take too long—it will suffice us to recall the essential character of this so-called Romantic School: this was personality. Contrary to the Classic writers who were impersonal, guided by reason alone toward an exterior goal, an ideal of perfection, the Romanticists made of their individual selves the object and the cause of their work. Corneille and Racine never spoke to us of themselves. Hugo, Lamartine, Musset did nothing else. They said: "My pain, my joy, my hate." Thus their own sentiments became the subject of their inspiration.

Beginning with 1820 the supreme style was to resemble the English type, which they call *dandy*, or *buck*, or *macaroni*, and who in France took the name of *gandin*, a frequenter of the *Boulevard de Gand*, as they called the *Boulevard des Italiens* in honor of the visit of Louis XVIII at Gand—or *lion*, fashionable, *cocodé*, *gommeux*, and others.

As to morale, these personages were of all sorts, but all their personality expressed itself in the costume, by which they wished to resemble no one if not their leader, their prototype, their model, George Brummel, Esq., whom they venerated, imitated, exalted, all of which enthusiasm is condensed into the volume which Barbey d'Aurevilly has consecrated to this rare hero.

Who was this Brummel? The grandson of a pastry cook who rented furnished rooms in his house to the son of a secretary of Lord North who made his fortune under his generous patron, "the God of Appointments," and was thus able to put the young George to school in 1790 at Eaton, where all the young noblemen came for their education.

Brummel has exercised over dandyism an Empire too marked not to merit attention. He has had as many historians as a leader of peoples, or a Saint of the Church: Jesse, the Englishman, has piously consecrated to him a voluminous study; Lister, Bulwer, de Coutades, Roger Boutet de Monvel, Barbey d'Aurevilly, and lately Jacques Boulenger in his interesting book on *The Dandy*, are some of those who have occupied themselves with this important personage.

Brummel had an aunt who kept a fashionable dairy, frequented by the elegant Londoners, among whom, was the Prince of Wales, the future George IV. The crown prince and the arbiter of elegancies made acquaintance over a cup of milk; they pleased each other and became fast friends. It was to this circumstance that Brummel owed being, while still young, overwhelmed with honors, received at court, and sought by the most brilliant of the nobility, who took him for their model. He had a very decided personality, proud and disdainful, an air which all young men envied, and a quick and insolent repartee. His witty sayings were passed about, and tradesmen sought the honor of styling themselves, "furnisher to Mr. Brummel." He considered that he paid them sufficiently by greeting them with a sign of the hand in passing them on the street.

He affected to be bored with life and to be interested in nothing but himself. On his return from Scotland some one asked him what view he had found most beautiful. He rang for his valet, and said to him: "Robinson, what view in Scotland was it that appeared to me most beautiful?"

Having been invited to the house of a rich manufacturer he was indignant that his host should seat himself at the table.

He imposed his impertinence everywhere. But he overstepped the mark. One day at the club he dared to say to the Prince of Wales:

"My dear George, ring the bell, will you?"

His Royal Highness rang, but it was to say to the servant: "Order Mr. Brummel's carriage."

This dismissal was the signal for his disgrace. He had squandered his fortune. He retired to Calais, where he finally died miserably.

This was the promoter of Dandyism, which was to occupy the brains of Paris upon the Boulevards, the Palais Royal, the Bois. The smart Englishman appeared as a longed-for ideal, a guiding star. The mussulman aspired to touch the Black Stone of the Kaaba with less fervor than the dandy longed to be a second Brummel.

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Paris Swelldom—it was composed between 1830 and 1840 of a class, the names of which are celebrated: Count d'Orsay, who gave his name to a carriage and a perfume, Alfred de Musset, Eugène Sue, Véron, Roqueplan, Roger de Beauvoir, Romien, and all those gathered together by J. Boulenger in his "*galerie à la Goncourt*"—all of these had their eyes fixed upon Hyde Park, and the least of the macaronis or dandys from over there had an immediate *vogue* in Paris, that is, in the space bounded by the *Café Anglais* at one end and the Jockey-Club at the other.

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Twenty years later English taste had lost nothing of its savour and its success in France.

We read with avidity the copious and amusing chronicles of Dumas Père, and with what does he entertain his readers, sure of pleasing them? He gives them in fifteen hundred compact lines an amusing account of his excursion to the celebrated race-course at Epsom, or with his visit to Madame Tussands, where occurred the ridiculous adventure of the cockney who wished to try the guillotine of Louis XVI and could not withdraw his head from the frame; or perhaps it is the superb epic of the Englishman, John William Peard, who all by himself declared war upon Austria, and whose heroism on the field of battle compelled the admiration of Garibaldi. The man in the red cap said to him:

"You are brave."

"I know it."

"And what is more, you are my friend."

"I did not know that. Shake hands!"

And it is thus that in 1860 was foreshadowed the fine and solid friendship which has brought to our side the English and the Italians for the defense of free humanity and the rights of moral beauty.

Among other things France owes to Anglomania tea and the race-course.

During the journey of President Fallières to London in 1908, King Edward VII, alluding to the *Entente Cordiale*, said: "At present the English wish to learn how to make coffee, and the French how to make tea."

This epigram shows that while the café, far from disappearing as Madame de Sevigné predicted, has flourished in France, tea has met with less favor though the English fashion of the tea-urn appeared there long ago. Since the Restoration there is no well-bred gathering where one is not offered a cup of tea, and it is more than half a century since the "Five-o'clock-tea" has been installed with us, following the English example in spite of reason. Luncheon is a desirable custom for our neighbors whose repasts obey different laws from ours. For them a breakfast at ten o'clock in the morning is far more agreeable than our coffee and rolls; it consists of tea, excellent eggs-and-bacon, and jam. The second meal, luncheon, is at two o'clock, the five-o'clock-tea at five o'clock as its name indicates, dinner at eight o'clock, and supper at eleven. This is a regimen for a people of the North who fortify themselves against the fogs by frequent and substantial eating.

With us, at the time of the Restoration, people dined at eleven, and supped at six. Luncheon was optional: thus when tea made its appearance it was taken in the evening at eleven o'clock with very light

pastry. It was the custom to pay calls after the theatre, and the tea-table was a permanent thing with ladies of fashion at this hour.

Since then the dinner-hour has been retarded, the five-o'clock-tea admitted and adopted. Then tea-rooms were opened, which are a kind of ladies' café, and they quickly persuaded themselves that their stomachs would suffer if they did not take tea with muffins, cakes, or "toasties" at the end of the afternoon. For pastry, cooking, gastronomy have all followed the movement and introduced among us plum-cake, plum-pudding, beefsteak, roast beef, and other products of the grill room. Read the romances of Balsac, Musset, Eugène Sue, and all those who flourished from 1820 to 1860; they are illumined in the evenings by the mauve flames of the pudding reflected in the cups where the Chinese leaves are infused.

Race-courses were also introduced into France by Snobism in imitation of the English. Charles X contributed to their success. He recalled that as Count d'Artois he had wished to try them in France, without success. The public made fun of the jockeys dressed in green and pink, or pink and black. The Directoire replaced these "Mummeries," as they called them, by antique chariot-races. Napoleon I himself could not make the race-course popular. Charles X succeeded in it only because of Anglomania. The English loved the turf; it must then be adopted. Races took place on the *Champs de Mars* and the *Bois de Boulogne*, and then at Chantilly where the fashion became popular. The sport was the rage. People fought for places in the grand-stand. In the evening there were concerts and fêtes upon the lakes; thirty thousand of the curious invaded the district. From 1835 it was a furore and the Vaudeville Theatre pre-

sented "*Les Courses de Chantilly*," by Lurine and Potron. A Society for Encouragement was organized; prizes were instituted, among others the Jockey Club prize. The words jockey, turf, starter, stud-book, pedigree, handicap, meeting, box, dead-head, book-maker, steeple-chase, sportsman, paddock, betting, canter, scratch, capered among the vocabulary like young and frisky chickens; the fashion was set, the turf was adopted, and we know the strange fortune which it has met with since then.

And the Club? Nothing is less French. Before 1830 men sought the society of women. Since the Marquise de Rambouillet, founder of the Blue Room and the Salons, mixed society had always been in order. But one day the men instituted the smoking-room to retire there among themselves after dinner, leaving the ladies to their own resources, then they founded a *Club*, a place from which women were excluded, and where they smoked, or gambled, or talked together in English fashion.

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The English boxed. We too must box. And about 1830, Charles de la Battut, better known as Mylord L'Arsoille, introduced this exercise into France. We know how it acclimatized itself there in spite of prohibitions: for it was forbidden for a long time, which was one means of making it known and popular.

About 25 years ago a boxing match was organized on a little island in the Seine near Rouen. The police raided it. But among the spectators was the Prince of Wales and others of the very high nobility. The police did not pursue their object further but withdrew.

To-day there is boxing in abundance, and the technical terms, uppercut, swing, round, are hammered as if with blows of

the fist into the most rudimentary brains.

All the English sports are popular with us: cricket, football, baseball, lawn-tennis, rowing, touring, yachting, camping, walking, skating, shooting, swimming, etc.

A young French girl will say to you glibly: "*Ce matin j'ai été en tramway, ou en Tilbury, ou en dogcart, ou en wagon, à mon tennis-club; j'ai dit play! Ma partenaire a répondu ready! Ma première ball a été net, et ma seconde out; j'étais d'abord a love-thirty, mais à la fin j'ai fait game, set, all!*"

Her mother, who plays bridge or poker, employs at least as many English words.

Her older brother goes to the *music-ball* or to some *magic-city*, where, before the war, he diverted himself with the waves, the waterchute, or the flip-flap, and he went to the *bar* to take a *pick-me-up*, or a *soda-water*, smoking a *Three Castles*, then he went to dance, or to see danced, the *cake-walk*.

There is no nation which has exercised over our ideas a more persistent influence; it can only be compared to the influence exercised for three hundred years by France over England, where our thinkers, our philosophers, and our poets are always pleased to go and salute the land of the liberty of the people and the dignity of the individual.

It is not, then, a sudden friendship which has drawn together the Tommies and the Poilus on the field of battle. They are old comrades which centuries of friendship have prepared for this union in honour, for communion in sentiments of nobility and loyalty, for this sympathy of natures equally honest, frank, and upright, firmly allied to exorcise, punish, and suppress moral ugliness, and to assure the triumph of moral peoples on the earth.

—*Le Revue.*